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AUTHOR Klausen, Arne Martin
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ABSTRACT

The basis for the New Norwegian Culture policy (NCC) is discussed in terms of the political attempt to extend the fundamental values of equality and social security into art and cultural life. The NCC is a result of a series of reports presented in the early 1970s which reflected a desire to see a broader welfare policy in Norway. The old form of cultural policy is characterized by a narrow concept of culture, priority given to elite art, a narrow group of consumers of elite art, central administration of cultural resources, cultural policy which reflects the establishment, and stipends and honorary salaries to artists. The new objectives encompass a widened concept of culture, mass consumption of art, culture policy in the form of social reform, and state guaranteed minimum salaries for artists. The perception of the visual artist has changed from a charismatic character to an average worker and from perserverance as an indicator of talent to collective organizing. The consensus is that the new policy reflects equality and social security as fundamental characteristics of Norwegian culture. Opposition within the NCC stems from the difficulty in finding a compromise between centralized power and local autonomy in distribution of resources for artists and art projects, relevance of the egalitarian and social security values to art, and funding priorities. Major grievances among artists include role perception, problems with the organization structure, and allocation of guaranteed income. (Author/KC)

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NORWAY'S NEW CULTURE POLICY AND THE ARTS:
VALUES IN CONFLICT.

By Arne Martin Klausen,
professor, dr. phil.
Department of Social Anthropology,
University of Oslo, Norway.

Paper presented at the symposium
EXPRESSIVE CULTURE IN SCANDINAVIA
Annual Meeting of American Anthropological Association
Cincinnati Nov. 28. 1979.

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VALUES IN CONFLICT.
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INTRODUCTION: "EXPRESSIVE CULTURE" AND NORWEGIAN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY.

In this paper Norwegian arts and cultural policy is discussed and analysed from a social anthropological perspective.

The term 'culture' is taken to mean the sector of society known in everyday language as cultural life and which includes such activities as works of visual art, the theatre, and music, etc. The word 'policy' means the efforts of both the political establishment as well as the artists to set up the aims, rules, regulations and the economic framework within which cultural activity should come.

This lecture is not the result of concrete, empirical research; it does not contain research results. It is merely a native social anthropologist's reflections on what to him is the most interesting aspect of his own culture. For some time now I have been doing fieldwork among Norwegian visual artists and this forms the basis of the article's contents and theoretical discussion.

Generally speaking, psychological anthropology and the research tradition this symposium springs from have little standing in Norway. It might therefore be necessary to begin by explaining the fundamental features which prevail in Norwegian social anthropology and therefore characterize this lecture. According to this theoretical orientation one of the chief aims of social anthropology is to analyse processes

that maintain and change socio-cultural forms at different levels of complexity and with different dimensions in time and space. A fundamental ingrediant of such processes and forms is real people in interaction, guided by personal motives, a definite cognitive orientation and a set of values. The whole functions within an ecological setting that itself constitutes a set of possibilities and limitations.

This paradigm, which in its most explicit form was developed by Fredric Barth (1966), is a kind of professional cognitive map used by many Scandinavian anthropologists.

The study of "expressive culture" cannot therefore be considered a separate research tradition in Scandinavian social anthropology. In other academic traditions, such as folklore, ethnological history and art, and the history of literature, research has shown how important, basic values in Norwegian culture (anthropologically speaking) manifest themselves in artistic products, not the least in folk culture. This research, however, has made use of very few of the quantitative and experimental techniques that have been developed through American research within the culture/personality tradition.

Norwegian anthropology has consentrated to a large extent on the economic and political processes. But in the past two years there has been more interest shown in symbolic communication and cognitive anthropology. "Expressive culture" as a substantial category is therefore a theme that engages more and more anthropologists, although the analytical method of approach is little changed.

Norwegian social anthropologists interested in what thus may be called "expressive culture" are not primarily

occupied with showing how well-integrated values in Norwegian society manifest themselves in institutionalized manifestations of culture. Neither are they occupied with how certain forms of "expressive culture" can have a therapeutic effect on frustrations that spring from conflicting values.

It can be accepted that certain values might possibly be so well integrated that they form components in something which can be called "identity", "national character", or "ethos". Social anthropologists in Norway, however, are primarily occupied with the fact that our present values are undergoing change everywhere, end that conflicting values and clashes of interests are the dominating influence that require analysis and explanation. There is always an expressive or communicative component in such processes, as old well-established values are disappearing and replaced by new ones. It is with such an introduction that this lecture must be construed.

THE PROBLEM PRESENTED

Even though many of this lecture's observations are connected with visual art, it is not my intention to analyse the product of the artist with a view to unveiling fundamental values in Norwegian society. Instead, I will begin at the other end, taking certain fundamental values for granted - values characterized by the expressions 'egality' and 'social security'.[1] It will be shown how the powers that be within political circles try to extend the validity of these values into areas which have not previously been particularly relevant - namely art and cultural life. In the process,

culture policy itself is given a significant expressive function. The political process has certainly not been without its problems and it would appear that it will have to face even more conflict in the times ahead. This analysis will attempt to uncover something of the character of these conflicts.

On the one hand, they might reflect the fact that our basic common values are not as clear cut as we assumed. On the other, they might be concerned with the disagreement on how resources are used rather than about objectives. It might also be that the conflicts are functional in character, i.e. that there is a logical disparity between aims and means.

OMPORTANT FEATURES IN THE NEW NORWEGIAN CULTURE POLICY

The basis for what is known as the New Norwegian culture policy (NNC) was laid as a result of a series of reports drawn up at the beginning of the seventies. They were presented by different departments and reflected a desire to see this wider welfare policy in Norway in the smallest possible sectorial perspective. Norway entered the oil age and among the questions asked was how the output from this new resource could be channeled into a wider welfare policy. Reports on the problems of young people, on the position of the Sabmi as a minority group, and on the living conditions of artists, and such like were commonplace. [2)]

Strictly speaking, the culture sector was an area which at that time had been almost untouched by officialdom. Furthermore, cultural activities in the practicing and "consuming" forms were regarded as a particularly important element in what was considered the good life.

In the middle of the seventies the country was being led by a liberal goverment, later followed by a Social Democratic administration. Each goverment produced a "white paper" on this subject, and both are surprisingly similar in their objectives and contents. When the Social Democratic goverment presented its final draught proposal to the Storting (Parliament) for debate in 1975, two new points included stressed the egalitarian objectives more strongly than the liberals had before them. But there was still broad agreement across party lines concerning the main essentials, which I will now describe.

First, however, a few words about "old culture policy". What had been done before?

The larger theatres, orchestras, main museums and art galleries were all run with the help of considerable state grants. Stipends were granted to a few young and talented artists and there were grants which amounted to state salaries given to some of the best known artists. Some of the wealthier districts were able to proffer support to cultural circles within the limitations of this elitist policy. "Riksteatret" and "Riksgalleriet" were set up to make elite urban art more accessible to the people in outlying districts. "Norsk Kulturråd" was established with a fund for financing some of the bigger ad hoc investments in the cultural sector. The traditionally accepted folk art also benefited to some extent from state grants.

There is a pattern here that is typical of most industrialized countries today. Those actually in cultural life formed a cultural elite, even although most of them, economically speaking, belonged to the lower middle class. A few belonged in the highest tax bracket.

Recruitment to creative and practising artistic roles was marked by strong competition, and the system had many losers. If one lived outside the capital there was little chance of competing successfully. In many ways the culture sector was something of a contrast to the welfare state's everyday workings with its relatively good welfare and social security.

NNC had four clear objectives:

(1) The continued and intensified spreading out of elite culture to more and more "consumers".

(2) The reassessment of activities such as amateur art and hobbies, which had previously been categorized as leisure time pursuits.

(3) The decentralization of cultural life.

(4) The use of the culture policy and cultural activities to reform society into "a qualitatively better society". The Social Democratic goverment used the expression "reform society in a socialist direction".

This formulation is the main cause of the disagreement and conflict over NNC emerging today.

For these objectives to be realized, economic resources are needed. During the last five years the funds provided for culture have been increased considerably.[3] The most interesting means, however, is not money. More essential and complicated is what is called the wider conception of culture. On reading political papers in which this innovation in Norwegian culture and politics is being discussed, one gets the impression that: Politicians of all parties are striving to reconcile the differences between, one the one one hand, egalitarian, nonauthoritarian values and, on the other, the demand for power and authority that is a prerequisite in the

managing of social developement.

By referring to some quotes and commentaries, I will try to present examples of this impression. In Goverment White Paper No. 52, the following paragraph contains the essence of NNC:

> "Planning in the cultural sphere one has to disinguish between: (1) culture, (2) culture/political objective, and (3) culture area, or culture/political area. The Ministry does not believe it necessary for an official body to give an authoritative definition of the term "culture" or to confine the form of cultural expression. They ought instead to formulate certain basic culture/political objectives. Such objectives should be a part of and feature all community life, while the culture area should be limited as much as possible in accordance with the appropriate division of the different society assignments.
>
> The following specifications in particular come within the culture/political area:
> art and art arranging
> library and similar culture arranging
> cultural preservation
> the mass media
> cultural efforts for children
> youth work
> athletics and physical development
> open air activities
> other cultural spare time activities
> voluntary organizations
> Nordic and international culture cooperation
> Lumped together under the heading of culture, these specifications demarcate the dividing line between two different points of view: (1) assignments which come under the category of culture/political objectives and values, and (2) assignments which logically come under the same administration."

It is stated quite explicitly above that the Ministry will not give an authoratative and official definition of the wider concept of culture's content. However, it is explicit and politically authoratative when it comes to culture/political objectives. Precision is necessary, according to the Ministry, when it concerns the administration of what comes under the wider concept of culture. In the last part of the citation it is stressed that the culture/political objective corroborates the fact that the activities listed belong together.

I might be asked whether the "wider conception of culture" is not just a question of administrative efficiency and rationalization. But on reading the documents carefully it is obvious that more than this is aspired to. It could be mentioned for instance that cultural work among special groups ought to be given higher priority. Children, old people, invalids, ethnic minorities are others. In other words, the culture/political programme exhibits a clear "social/political" profile.[4)]

In the parliamentary debate surrounding the Ministry's white paper, very few of the more essential points were changed. The three-party opposition of course had to make some comment. The liberal wing objected to the culture policy being used to reform society "in a socialist direction". But in fact in many of their formulations they actually strengthened the social/political profile in the final proposal to Parliament. A couple of representatives of the Christian Democrats wanted more explicit discussion of the boundaries of artistic freedom and to actively oppose what they called value nihilism. One representative of the left-wing of the socialists stressed that the culture/political

programme did not go far enough in discussing the "power game" in society and its culture/political consequences. He said:

> "It is in itself correct in a cultural analysis to examine the situation between national culture and minority culture. This perspective will be defective, however, if one doesn't begin with the opposition between work and capital. The strength of capital's control over the economic and material life of a society also manifests itself in the cultural and ideological area.
>
> This member is pointing out that the concept of culture as expressed in the white paper only to some extent represents a qualitative expansion in relation to traditional thinking. Cultural activity is found in all real spare time pursuits and so cultural activities can easily be isolated from fundamental social conditions. A starting point in the everyday life of the people at work and in the local community would have put other assignments at the centre of cultural policy. Customs and traditions, the languages of different social and ethnic groups, building traditions, tools and working traditions would be important expressions of culture in such a situation. This culture of the people, which only to some extent appears via established cultural institutions, work culture, building culture, female culture and the culture of suppressed groups, must to a much greater extent be given official priority."

The member criticized the fact that the concept of culture has not been expanded qualitatively. He claims that unless the items he lists are given higher priority, it is pretty much as before.

He sides with the govermental committee, however, in

its statement not to give a clear definition of what the constituents of the widened concept of culture should be - just as in the goverment white paper. The committee has actually written a great deal concerning the contents, but it is called "some important viewpoints explaining and setting a limit to what is meant by the word 'culture' from a political point of view". They talk about the widening of "cultural understanding" from a biased concentration of aesthetic values on the one hand, to a more holistic perspective on the other; a perspective that is actually reminiscent of an anthropological concept of culture. Here are some quotations:

> "A wider understanding of culture stressing the quality of people's surroundings and creative activities breaks through the narrow framework culture policy has had till now."

> "In the final analysis, the objective of any culture policy should be the stimulation of the individual to develop his own talents and potential, to widen his perception, to enrich his experience, to develop his emotional and reasoning ability and maturity in judgement and taste - in short, to develop the well-rounded human being in the full meaning of the word."

> "The dividing line between artist and public in this perspective is of less significance. It will still be the case that only some few are sufficiently gifted to be able to put up an original performance on a professional level. They have a particularly important role to play in cultural life. But in a wider sense, everyone is creative at one's own level. Culture is not something "created" by the few and "received by

> the many. Everyone is a participant in the culture creating process."

> "Culture policy has taken on a new dimension. Along with the more aesthetic values and the traditional preservation of cultural inheritance welfare dimensions in it's broadest sense are taken into consideration. I see as one of the most important features of the new culture policy the fact that cultural work has become part and parcel of general social enviroment politics."

It was the Minister for Culture who expressed himself in this way when he handed over the draught for parliamentary approval. These quotations are among many which describe what is meant by the wider concept of culture. So, all things considered, although it is said that an authoritative definition of culture would not be given, it has nevertheless been defined implicitly.

Decentralization

The last important means for realizing the objectives in NNC was a new decentralized cultural administration. The economic means which were appropriated were henceforth to be made over to the counties and local authorities as an annual grant in accordance with the respective population. It was to be up to the local communities themselves to decide to what use they should put the money. But they nonetheless had to go along with two demands made by the central authorities. First, all local communities and counties were to establish a culture administration. To help with this the central authorities worked out some

administration blue-prints and the local authorities could choose whichever arrangement satisfied their particular needs. In every county a chief officer of culture or culture secretary was employed. This is a completely new profession and a training programme has been set up at a couple of the new Regional Colleges.

The other demand made by the central authorities was that the money be kept separate from the other finances of the local communities, and used for all to see, on new ventures in the culture sector, within the lines set down in the parliamentary resolution on NNC.

The central authorities also started up a new kind of cultural investigation to keep tabs on what the local communities used the money for, and in the long term to lay the basis for an evaluation study into how well NNC's resolutions were being carried out.[5)]

The new "centrally initiated decentralizing" was accepted in its entirety by the local communities. Economically it meant a real increase in resources. There was some dissatisfaction with the newly imposed forms of administration, however. Many local politicians thought that the existing committees dealing with spare time activities, such as athletics, libraries, etc., in most local communities could administer the new resources. The main points in the wider concept of culture implied however that the previous sector commitee's working areas should be coordinated. Several former committee chairmen interpreted this to mean that one's freedom within the sector was being curtailed, and that the new culture administration came as a new main political body with authority over the old sector committees. In other words, not everybody, at the beginning, regarded NNC's policy

as decentralizing, with increased cultural autonomy to local society.

VISUAL ARTISTS AND THE NEW NORWEGIAN CULTURE POLICY

What did cultural life's main performers think of this programme. For various reasons, painters and sculptors played a main role in this context. First, because economically speaking they constituted one of the worst off groups. An investigation made by the sociologist Aina Helgesen in 1972 on the economic situation of artists in this field and their working situation generally, gave them good reasons for furthering a strong claim against the authorities. This induced the authorities - in connection with the NNC - to publish a separate white paper entitled 'Artists and society' (St. meld. No. 41, 1975/76). It presents several proposals for improving the working situation and economic security of painters and sculptors. The white paper discusses how professional and established artists can make best use of the state appropriations within the framework of NNC, and thus giving artists more opportunity to cooperate with realizing the general policy outlined in NNC.

Another situation which contributed to these artists playing the most active role at this time, was that they already had a relatively strong centralized organizational apparatus. This was mobilized in the conflict, but at the same time it directed itself against its own existing organizational structure. The debate on the organization's structure was very intense during the seventies. Those who considered that the organizations were out of date, saw in the NNC a chance for support.

On this background it was important for the artists to discuss the conception of their role as well as the structure of the organization, in light of the proposals of NNC.

It was not just the state initiative that accelerated this internal discussion among artists about their status and organization. The general radicalism of the sixties took root among the artists also, and we had a wave of political art which aimed at criticism of the establishment. The criticism was covertly directed at the cultural establishment. It is interesting and at the same time paradoxical that the younger generation of artists took the side of the authorities in the culture policy. The revolution in the artists' organization structure and working conditions took place due to an unusual alliance between radical young artists and the establishment, and it was this union along with broad political agreement that brought about NNC. An important aspect of NNC which we have not yet mentioned and which refers particularly to the visual artists, was the unique state salary arrangement, which we will come back to in detail in a moment.

In order to give a picture of the artists' attitude to NNC and the criticism directed against their own organizational structure, one must have a brief outline of the old structure and target for criticism.

The first uprising of European artists against bourgeois art took place in the latter half of the 1800's. In Norway it was Oslo's private artists' association which constituted the bourgeois. As early as 1887 came the first 'Høstutstilling' (Autumn Exhibition); it was known officially as the 'State Art Exhibition'.[6] It has usually always been administrated by the artists themselves. At times the artist recruited power centre has been just as domineering as its earlier conservative

counterpart; throughout the exhibition's century long existence there have been many protest actions against it also.

Anyone can send in a painting, non-professional and professional, with a view to having it on show at the autumn exhibition. All paintings are appraised by a 'permanent jury', the members of which are elected from among the so-called 'right-to-vote' artists. Artists attained previously this status after having had their work accepted no less than five times. A committee elected earlier by the 'right-to-vote' artists has been the state's most important means of contact and advice in matters concerning art.

Getting one's work accepted for the 'Høstutstilling' has always been difficult. Only very few of the students who left art schools each year had any chance at all. At the same time it sometimes happened that the works of completely self taught artists passed the scrutineers. The French system, where private art dealers set up careers for different artists and keep them like horses in a stable, has not caught on in Norway. The state art exhibition, the permanent jury, and the National Gallery's purchasing committee have been the sole institutions for the recruitment of Norwegian painters and sculptors.

One realizes that with such a structure there is a great possibility of an oligarchy developing. Throughout the 1900's there have been waves of criticism against it and against those who have had leading roles at different times. Most of the criticism has been uncoordinated and not very successful. To the extent that changes have taken place, it has been rebellions, and not revolutions, as Max Gluckmann put it.

The system is founded on the usual comprehension of art and its place in society typical of the industrialized part of the world. Important features of this particular understanding of art are the following: Art should be original, extremely individual, barrier breaking. It is the product of exceptional creative ability; it is sacred, and beyond the mundane. The artist is a charismatic figure with talent - an ability which cannot be defined other than through the revelations of a 'magnificent' work of art. One can learn to be an artist of a kind, but the real artist is born to his profession. Artistic life style is understood as being incompatible with the everyday trivialities of administration and routine. The successful participants in this system are surrounded by an aura of official attentions, and so there comes the idea that hardship - economic and artistic - serves to separate them from the 'real artists'. In other words, it is through suffering hardship and drudgery that one can best demonstrate one's talent.

This elite orientated comprehension of art and artists and the accompanying charismatic role, are the complete opposite of the general idea of equality, even distribution of responsibility in working life, and the corresponding equality in remuneration and other systems of payment and security through the welfare state.

The artists' revolt in Norway (as in other places) represented, from the point of view of the extreme left, a revolt against all those who thought and acted in this way. In their own words: they would destroy the conception of art and the artist as outlined here and as is often characterized as the artist myth, and would transform the work of artists into work in the ordinary sense. Those who disagreed might

have expressed it in this way: They will level out artistic quality and reward mediocrity by all kinds of bureaucratic means.

NNC, on the other hand, did not go against elite art in itself. As quoted earlier, NNC set its sights on strengthening it. Those responsible in NNC were also working hard to show that the average person's everyday activities also contained creative elements, and so therefore would try to raise it to the elite art's level of recognition. In this lay the possibility of alliance between the state and the artists who now wanted a revolutionary change in the organization and role conception.

The artists who started the revolt against the art establishment and who brought the claim against the state, belonged, as so often happens, to the Young Artists Association.[7] During the course of the sixties the number of active, but non-established artists increased a bit, particularly those involved in arts and crafts. In addition, there were many artists living in different parts of the country who felt that the centre dominated art policy despite the fact that they themselves had begun to form their own district organizations.

Just as in many other fields during the sixties and seventies, the artist revolt took form of a spontaneous non-bureaucratic demonstration. Meetings, discussions, and demonstrations in and outside the 'establishment' culminated in 1974, when 'Artists Campaign 74' was established. This new representative forum had connections with twenty-one different established artists' organizations of authors, composers, painters, actors, etc.

The influence of leftist oriented artists dominated Artists Campaign 74. While there was relatively wide support

for the NNC, as a general political programme, from different political parties, there was stronger opposition from some artists against the political programme the campaign stood for. On both art-political extremes the greatest pressure was placed on seeing art policy in a political mainstream perspective. In other words, the most conservative artists saw the new policy as a threat to themselves and to society, while those on the extreme left regarded the art-political perspective as subordinate to a mainstream-political revolutionary perspective.

We will not at this point go into the problems which beset the Artists' Campaign, suffice to say that after a while more moderate factions took over the leadership, and the art-political feature became the most important.

VISUAL ARTISTS STRUGGLE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Gradually the demands of the Artists' Campaign bacame clear in a three-point program:

(1) Full remuneration for the use of artists' work.

(2) An extended and better use of their work.

(3) A guaranteed income for all professional artists not receiving adequate income for work mentioned under points (1) and (2) above.

The main content of this programme however was older than the Artists' Campaign.

In the goverment white paper entitled 'Artists and Society' it was accepted that artists, in the same way as other work groups, should have the right to negotiate their own conditions. The paper states:

> "Creative artists should have the same right to negotiate their working conditions as other professiona' groups in society."

This, however, presupposes a proper organization to negotiate with. The organization structure at that time just was not suited to such a situation. It derived from a completely different conception of the artist. The committee of visual artists who had earlier acted as advisers to the state on questions of art and who on the state's behalf arranged the state art exhibition, could not, of course, be shop stewards like a trade union, face to face with an employer.

One of the main reasons for the spontaneous artist demonstration was to negotiate for a new structure which, could function like a trade union, with the state as a kind of employer. That it was the state and not a private client who was to be the employer is connected with the three-point programme. It was most important that the state recognized the principle of a guarenteed minimum income (GMI). This unique arrangement, with parallels in only Sweden and The Netherlands, was introduced in 1977. It implies that a very high percentage of artists are guaranteed an annual income corresponding to grade five on the state salary scale ($10.000).[81] The system is such that if an artist has any other income, his guaranteed income is reduced by 65 percent of his other earnings. For 1979 this means that if someone has a net extra income of $15.000, the state share ceases. Once having acquired the right to a guaranteed income, however, it is maintained until the recipient reaches pensionable age, at the moment 67 years, by which time the ordinary old age pension is paid out.

It goes without saying that with such sudden improvement

in the economic lot of the artist, there began a struggle for rights to claim the new benefits. It was quite obvious that the state did not intend giving a guaranteed minimum wage to every man jack who considered himself an artist. The state imposed rather stringent selection qualifications.

In the fiscal year 1979, when there were 795 artists with the right to vote, the state granted 300 maximum guaranteed wages. This was sufficient for 438 artists, only just over half, but probably to most of those who needed it.

Earlier I claimed that the part of NNC which concerned the artists provided the foundation for an alliance between the state and artists who wanted radical change in their position and organization. This does not mean that the alliance was conflict free. There was considerable strife and heated discussion when it came to the steering of GMI.

The radicals contested the issue on two fronts. First they opposed their conservative fellow artists, who wanted to maintain the old organization structure which they believed could be used in negotiations with the state on GMI. Some of these artists actively opposed the GMI arrangement. Secondly, the state would not give in to their demands for a GMI for <u>all</u> active artists. To begin with, the state acted more or less as an observer on the split caused by the disagreement on the organization structure.

As time drew near for the introduction of GMI, the state asked for a clarification. An interesting compromise solution had been found. BKS, the former cooperating body of the state and the artists, was not allowed to take part in the main discussion on GMI. The new 'trade organization' (Norwegian Visual Artists Trade Union Organization, NBFO) and the old sector organization of painters, sculptors,

illustrators, etc. had become the state's negotiating partners. When it came to evaluating the qualifications of each applicant, however, it was necessary to resort to the old system of the 'permanent jury'. With that, the foundation was laid for a new kind of labour division, which I will deal with later.

The trouble of GMI concerned different conceptions of the role of the artist. At the beginning, when opposition to the permanent jury was very strong, some artists held the view that an artist should be defined as a worker with some degree of training (art school) and who was professionally active (i.e. producing art). Those who made this claim also believed that everyone in their category should have the right to GMI. In the middle of the seventies this would have meant about 1.300 people. A majority of artists, however, believed that certain qualifications in addition to education must be met. But who was to make the evaluation? Some thought the old arrangement with the state's art exhibition and permanent jury was the only way that quality could be guaranteed. An ever increasing number of artists, however, believed that the jury arrangement could be made more pluralistic. The main way to do this would be to accept the district organizations' juries on the same footing as the central jury.

This came about in 1976 when new regulations were introduced as regards the right to vote. The right to vote could now be attained after having exhibited three times at the state exhibition or five times at any other officially organized exhibition anywhere in the country plus once at the state exhibition. This implied a liberalization and decentralizing. The number of artists with the right to vote increased considerably from 493 in 1970 to 795 in 1979.

The effort to get the district organizations' juries recognized was an important lead in the alteration of the organization structure. Right until 1972 the district organizations had been regarded as fellow participants in the art political struggle, and their influence increased considerably as the time went on.

With support from most of the district organizations the central radical artists succeedes in 1975 in building up a completely new art political organization structure - the Norwegian Visual Artists Trade Union Organization (NBFO). It is founded as an ordinary democratic trade organization in which the leadership gets its mandate from the decision of the members at its annual congress. The leadership in the organization managed, with considerable political acumen, something which had been lacking in artist circle previously: it got most Norwegian visual artists to accept their solutions and proposals. But it was a very dramatic period which we will leave be for the time being. In concervative circles one often uses expressions like coup and infiltration. Anthropologists see this as an interesting case of entrepreneur tactics which in itself merits separate analysis.

A meeting of artists is due to take place soon at which the old BKS will probably be dissolved and replaced by a new body subsidiary to NBFO, but with a separate mandate. During the heat of the campaign it became necessary to differentiate between trade political and trade technical problems and duties.

Job politics means everyday trade union affairs, wage negotiations, etc. Technical questions are defined as problems, purely artistic in nature, such as judging quality, appraising, etc. Many artists foresee big problems in this division. Most, however, believe that the main job at the moment is to try

to make the division as clear cut as possible and to set up two organizations to deal with the respective problems. Whether it will succeed, only the future can tell.

SUMMARY

Let us try to draw some main conclusions from this complex ethnographic description. The accompanying table lists key expressions describing the essential features of NNC as well as the artists' political field of action.

NORWEGIAN CULTURAL POLICY

	Old form	New form
1.	Concept of culture defined as a narrow sector	The widened concept of culture
2.	Elite art given priority	Non-professional and other spare time activities given higher priority
3.	The 'consumers' of elite art constitute a narrow group; exclusive	Elite art for everybody; 'mass consumption'
4.	Cultural resources administered centrally	Decentralized administration
5.	Culture policy which reflects the establishment. Elite culture's social autonomy	Culture policy in the service of social reform
6.	Stipends/honorary salaries to artists	Study/travel grants, state guaranteed minimum salary
	VISUAL ARTISTS	
7.	Artist's role Charismatic character, 'shaman model'	Average worker, 'craftsman model'
8.	Commendation criteria Talent/quality	Education/activeness
9.	Career and working situation Solitary struggle, perseverance as indicator of talent, dream of the big breakthrough	Collective organizing, right to negotiate, state employee
10.	Sale of art Private sales and patron activities	Bigger official 'consumption' of art. Compensation for use of art at exhibitions, private sales
11.	Organization structure Oligarchic, self-recruiting, centralized authority in BKS with no A.G.M.	Representative, democratic structure, delegated authority at district organizations and congresses
12.	Art political problems Judging and advising for the state combined with working for better conditions for artists	Clear division in trade politics and technical work

With this as a basis, the following questions can be raised:

1. Does the new Norwegian culture policy reflect egality and social security as important features in the fundamental characteristics of Norwegian culture?
2. Do the grievances reflect disagreement as regards the relevance of such values on art and cultural circles?
3. Are the conflicts functional in character, i.e. do they stem from incompatability between objectives and resources of the political process?

I think the first question can be answered 'yes'. The broad political agreement on points 1-6 in the table is surprising. Some might claim that the objectives are so generally formulated that it is difficult not to concur with them. But NNC also contains concrete solutions, e.g. GMI; opposition to GMI has been minimal. The parliamentary white papers on culture - socialist and liberal - refer to a metacommunication on egality and the value of social security. In Roland Barthes' words, The white papers are expressed in a "mythical language" which, just like an adventure story, brings about fundamental values in Norwegian society. (Barthes, 1978) [9]

As we saw earlier, there are opposing forces within NNC. Although no authoritative definition of culture is given, the central authority details what the objective of the culture policy will be. Instructions are given as regards local administration structure, but no directions on what the money should be used for. In many ways NNC is a fine example of the dilemma of democracy: finding the compromise between centralized power

and local autonomy. If it is important that such dilemmas are solved and that compromise solutions are found, then it must be that anti-authoritarian and egalitarian values are strong.

It is realization which causes political strife. What means should be used and how should limited resources be allocated? The emerging conservative resistance has obviously been formulated by the cultural editor in the country's largest newspaper (Jor, 1979). He remarks on the fact that there has been little debate on NNC, and tries to inflame the situation. It is the use of the culture policy in social reform that is the cause of most criticism; not against further egalitarian social reform per se. It is first and foremost disagreement over the relevance criteria as formulated in question No. 2. Another point in conservative criticism has to do with priorities. With the means at one's disposal as limited as they are, should volunteer cultural work be self financed? The state grants should go to elite art's institutions and to practising artists. Non-professional activities can be supported economically, but through receiving training taught by professionals. [10]

Turning now to the discussion among the artists there is no justification for inciting to rebellion. The major grievances over role conception and organization structure among artists are extremely complex. Complete analysis would need a more systematic collection of data and a more precise and methodical presentation than I have been able to give here. In concluding, however, I would like to mention some factors.

The consequences of the traditional conceptions of role are very important, with emphasis on individualism, originality, creative ability, talent, etc. A conscious element of anti-intellectualism is also a prominent feature. Furthermore, artists who have chosen the visual art as their medium are not always masters

of spoken and intellectual communication. Artists' meetings and other assemblies where artists discuss their problems, stand out in stark contrast to trade union meetings.

While the average worker's attitude to his product is quite objective and certainly not emotional, the artist's relationship with the outcome of his work is quite another thing. This can have consequences. In artists' organizations it is to a certain extent possible to convert organizational ability and activity to an increase in artistic status. In a craft profession where the struggle for economic security and artistic recognition is very competitive, there are some who are more aware of these converting possibilities than others and manage to use them to their own advantage. However, those who take advantage of such possibilities are in for strong criticism from their colleagues if the converting becomes too obvious.

There is a strong belief among artists that really good artists are not good administrators, and that it is often the mediocre ones who are. But still one has the feeling that artists emphazise the importance of having the most renown as their organizational leaders. I hardly think that the automobile workers' trade union would stipulate that only the best mechanic can become the best shop steward. Artists conceiving their role in this way charge the organizational atmosphere with a strong bias of personal and private interests, and the solidarity level is low as a concequence.

It is therefore not without reason that the radical artists saw a connection between the artist's role and the organization pattern, and have laid stress on the image of the 'workers' and the 'trade union' as the opposing models in this struggle for reform. However, there are no indications

that the extreme form to the right under points 7 and 8 is attainable. Even the most radical artists have not wanted to give up the total freedom which up till now has been considered an important part of the role of the artist and as a pre-requisite for creative ability. Scientists, another creative work group, have accepted a certain reduced freedom in that they are obliged to administrate and educate. Such alternatives to GMI have never been discussed seriously. In conversations I have had with artists they have been unacceptable. The fact is that most artists were in just this kind of working situation before the introduction of GMI. Most of them had a part-time job, but this was considered damaging to their artistic work.

In order to fit in with the pattern of ordinary working life, the welfare state's recognition of the demands of the artist, must necessarily include compromise. We are talking about functional opposites.

The artists' grievances in the seventies can be summarized as follows: Where role conception is concerned, the compromise idea is not much removed from the old one. Progress has been made towards a new form of appraisel. More emphasis is put in the criterion of activity and the old jury arrangement no longer carries the weight it once had. The reason there has been a fairly big change here has no doubt to do with the fact that modern art is very difficult to evaluate.[11] There is still no sure way of measuring talent at an early age. Quantitative variables such as amount of work produced, emotional concentration on certain subjects, the judgement of history, etc. must still be used.

During negotiations concerning the allocating of GMI, there have obviously been difficulties in the application of

criteria. The state has always regarded GMI as a support to professional artists but has not accepted the plea that <u>every</u> active artist should have it. It is stated in the protocol that only those who have 'contributed qualitatively during the course of several years' qualify for GMI. This expression is just one example of the kind of quantitative variable used. In other words, the possibility is there to apply the seniority principle to every applicant who fulfils the qualitative minimum. For anyone who has not followed the negotiations from the inside, it would seem that the minimum quality criteria now used are very similar to the activity criterion of the radicals. Next criteria to be used will be seniority, not as an active artist but purely by age. I have it on good authority that this year the age limit for GMI will be about forty!

Under point 9 a practice has already been developed and principles applied that are used in everyday working life, and they imply a completely new form.

Most of the main contents of points 10 and 11 have also been changed. It is too early yet to come to any conclusions as regards point 12. It might be that there could be difficulty in differentiating between the two work oparations and that the organization structure could swing back to the oligarchical position.

All things considered, however, the development of the new form has gone so far in the seventies that there is good reason to categorize the result of the artists' discontent as a revolution, not just a rebellion. Paradoxically enough, it has been a revolution with the state not as the opposition, but as supporters. As we can see, yet another part of Norwegian society has come under the protective wing of the welfare state.

NOTES

1. Pointers to the fact that egality is an essential part of the fundamental characteristics of Norwegian culture are the following: the image the Norwegians have of themselves, and in the few studies made by foreign scientists, there are sevaral who accept such a change as valid (Chambers, for example, in this symposium). A study of Norwegian folk tales (Adma d'heurle et al. 1978) concludes with the following:

> "The tradition that the Norwegian folktale embodies and perpetuates may be described in Ruth Benedict's terms as a cultural tradition of high synergy. It is a tradition that tends to encourage the sublimation of aggression, underplays the role of competition and individual achievement, stresses egalitarian interaction, upholds individual rights and minimizes hierarchical arrangements even in its definitions of the natural and supernatural."

The British social anthropologist John Barnes has also discussed this self image (1953). More objectively measurable criteria which can be mentioned are the fact that the Norwegian state salary scale is the most egalitarian in the world in that the differential between top and bottom is smaller than anywhere else. The graduated tax system is very strong. Historians claim that the Norwegian Constitution of 1814 is the most democratic in Europe as regards the right to vote. Most historians depict Norway as a country with a long tradition in egalitarianism. There has been a strong layman's movement and a certain opposition to professionalism (a verbal statement by Professor Sivert Langholm). Even royalty tries to

reconcile the high born with the ordinary. Many Norwegians have bumped into the king on his Sunday ski tour in Nordmarka, hardly recognizing him as His Majesty.

2. The social Democratic goverment set in motion an applied sociological research project in which the objective is to map the power forces in Norwegian society, both formally and informally. This is the biggest project Norwegian social scientists have so far undertaken for the official authorities. Politicians themselves have agreed to be study subjects. It aims to uncover the power centre with i view to contributing to general political objectives and proposals (G. Hernes, ed. 1978).
3. For example, appropriations for stipends and GMI have increased six times in the past five years.
4. As well as being able to use the wider concept of culture in a general political context, the wider concept of health and the wider concept of work are also additions to the political and social vocabulary. The latter was constructed by a social anthropologist(Wadel, 1979).
5. The Minister for Culture has the following to say about this:

> "An interest in the situation between individuals, culture and society is what characterizes the new culture research. There is often talk about culture sociological research and sometimes talk about culture economic research. There are also other topical gateways - anthropology, teaching, psychology, etc. (K. Egeland, 1979).

6. Many believe this exhibition is as uniquely a Norwegian phenomenon as 'dried codfish and the cheese knife' (J. D. Nielsen, 1977). It is unique in that it has retained its image and popularity for so lang, and that it has been run

by the artists themselves even though it is called the State Art Exhibition.

7. The Young Artists' Association is an old established organization with its own art gallary and jury panel. It has also to some extent functioned as an economic cooperate in which one could exchange art for goods which were subsequently distributed among the poorer members.
8. Another work group paid at this level on the state salary scale is unskilled labourers! it is also the starting salary of office assistants. It is the lowest level on the scale.
9. In a moment of self-irony the Minister of Culture also indicated this when he said in a lecture:

> "As you all know, the politicians in this country are unanimous in their agreement that more emphasis must be placed on culture political ventures if we are to shape society in the way that we want to, and if we are to create a qualitatively better society with more scope for soft values - just so long as I am allowed to get finished with all the pompous expressions from beginning tc end (my italics) (Egeland, 1979).

10. In east European counries the emphasis is on allowing non-professionals to get help from official instructors. These people are usually educated at ethnologists and they instruct on the officially recognized way of folk dancing, embroidery, pottery, etc. This implies a fairly strong influence on artistic perception from the central authorities.
11. During the years 1955 to 1971 there was an average of twenty artists making their debut every year, this number divided between painters, sculptor and lithographers, a representation

of 20 percent of the total number of exhibiting artists. This year, of 317 exhibitors, 100 are making their debut, i.e. 30 percent. Several of our most well known artists were refused. A professor at the Academy of Art told me that he knew of well established artists who did not send in works for fear of being refused.

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